

Session at SAH (Atlanta, 30 Apr–4 May 25)

Atlanta, Georgia, Apr 30–May 4, 2025

Deadline: Jun 5, 2024

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"Beyond the Postcolonial: Methods, Problems, Openings",
Society of Architectural Historians (SAH) 2025 Annual International Conference,
April 30th - May 4th, 2025 in Atlanta, Georgia.

Session Chairs: Riad Kherdeen (University of California, Berkeley), Johanna Sluiter (University of Bern).

Since the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, the field of postcolonial studies has expanded across the humanities and social sciences. However, what was originally intended to critique colonialism and reveal its technologies of power and violence has gradually become devoid of this foundational political impetus. Employed to signify a range of chronologies, geographies, and theoretical approaches, the potency of the term has been diluted, with meaning(s) further complicated by variations that have arisen from translations and encounters with different disciplines and languages. Within architectural history, the simultaneous explosion of usage and implosion of significance has led to widespread albeit vague application, with "postcolonial architecture" simply connoting periodization in what has come to be known as the "Global South."

This panel seeks critical reexamination of postcolonial terminology, focusing on its utility and limitations in architectural discourse and research. We aim to explore the nuanced ways postcolonial frameworks have been mobilized, question their continued relevance, and explore alternative models. Although not the first to consider such questions, architectural history has yet to significantly contribute to this larger conversation. Following reappraisal in other disciplines, we aspire to revive the self-reflexivity inherent to postcolonial critique to ask: how might we move beyond the postcolonial?

Contributors should reflect on the use of postcolonial terminology, assessing its validity and valences, while considering motivations for continued usage. Rather than exhume the corpus of historical examples, we encourage contributions that engage with the term's failure and obsolescence, including problems with the "postcolonial" as well as the importation of terms from other disciplines. We especially invite meditation on new perspectives that might enable movement away from the colonality of the discipline itself. This session will foster discussion on new methodologies and pedagogies, ensuring that postcolonial concepts retain their significance in contemporary architectural history.

Submission Guidelines:

Confirmed 2025 Session Chairs are not eligible to submit to the Call for Papers.

Abstracts must be under 300 words. The title cannot exceed 65 characters, including spaces and punctuation.

Abstracts and titles must follow the Chicago Manual of Style.

Only one abstract per conference by an author or co-author may be submitted.

A maximum of three (3) authors per abstract will be accepted.

Please attach a two-page CV in PDF format.

Please submit an abstract no later than 11:59 p.m. CDT on June 5, 2024, via the SAH website:

<https://www.sah.org/2025/call-for-papers>

Reference:

CFP: Session at SAH (Atlanta, 30 Apr-4 May 25). In: Arthist.net, May 6, 2024 (accessed Jun 7, 2025),

<<https://arthist.net/archive/41764>>.